

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, GR, PINT

SUBJECT: ARE THE MONARCHISTS PLANNING A COMEBACK?

1. WHAT HAS BEEN GRIST FOR THE RUMOR MILL IN ATHENIAN COFFEE HOUSES OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS--MAINLY THAT ELEMENTS FROM BOTH THE MONARCHISTS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE FORMER JUNTA WILL JOIN TOGETHER TO LAUNCH SOON A NEW ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE PARTY--HAS BROKEN RECENTLY INTO THE PRESS. FOR SOME TIME THE SIDEWALK EXPERTS, SPECULATING ON THE PROSPECTS OF THIS NEW PARTY, HAVE BEEN FORMULATING VARIOUS SCENARIOS AS TO JUST WHO WOULD CREATE THE NEW ENTITY, IF ANYTHING IT WOULD REPRESENT AND WHAT MIGHT BE THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT. THE COMMON WISDOM AGREES THAT SUCH FIGURES AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER STEPHANOS STEPHANOPOULOS, POPULAR FORMER DEPUTY SPYROS THEOTOKIS, AND OTHER WELL KNOWN RIGHTISTS, INCLUDING DISAFFECTED RETIRED MILITARY PREVIOUSLY AFFILIATED WITH THE JUNTA, WILL BE THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS. THE SCOPE OF THE PARTY IS WIDELY SAID TO BE TO REINSTATE AND PRESERVE THE CONSERVATIVE VALUES OF THE GREEK NATION AS WELL AS TO THWART WHAT SOME ENVISAGE AS THE MENACE OF COMMUNISM.

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2. TA NEA (LIBERAL, OPPOSITION) IS THE MOST RECENT

JOURNAL TO DEAL WITH THE STORY BY FRONTPAGING ON FEBRUARY 17, IN BANNER HEADLINES, THAT THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW "MONARCHIST-JUNTAIST" PARTY IS IMMINENT. THE NEWSPAPER PREDICTED THAT THE EVENT MIGHT POSSIBLY OCCUR FEBRUARY 20 IN THESSALONIKI WHERE, ACCORDING TO TA NEA, THE ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE ITS BROADEST BASE. THE TA NEA VERSION MENTIONED THE STALWARTS (LISTED IN PARA ONE ABOVE) AS FOUNDING FATHERS. ALSO IMPLICATED BY TA NEA WERE LEONIDAS PAPAGOS, ONCE A SECRETARY TO KING CONSTANTINE AND THE SON OF MARSHALL ALEXANDROS PAPAGOS, GREECE'S FAMOUS GENERAL AND POST-WORLD WAR II LEADER, TOGETHER WITH ALLEGED REBELS IN THE NEW DEMOCRACY PARTY. UNFORTUNATELY FOR TA NEA, ITS ADVENTURISM WAS SOMEWHAT UNDERCUT THE NEXT DAY WHEN BOTH STEPHANOPOULOS AND THEOTAKIS ISSUED SEPARATE PUBLIC DENIALS OF THEIR INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SUCH PARTY. THEY LABELLED THE TA NEA STORY AS "DISGUSTING AND MALICIOUS". STEPHANOPOULOS NOTED THAT THOSE PEOPLE WHO KNEW HIM LAUGHED AT SUCH PUBLICATIONS. THEOTAKIS WENT FURTHER AND REBUKED TA NEA FOR PRINTING SUCH DISTURBING ARTICLES IN A TIME OF NATIONAL UNCERTAINTY.

3. COMMENT: DURING THE PAST YEAR A NUMBER OF MONARCHIST GROUPS HAVE EMERGED, SOME CONSISTING OF BUT A FEW INDIVIDUALS WHILE OTHERS APPEAR BETTER ORGANIZED AND OF MORE SERIOUS INTENT. MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE THE MONARCHISTS ARE STILL VERY MUCH TESTING THE POLITICAL CLIMATE, THE LEGAL INSTITUTION OF SUCH A PARTY IS NOT IMMINENT.

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